

MOUNT FOR ATTACHING AN ORNAMENT TO A TREE

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to a mount, and more particularly, to an extendable mount for mounting an ornament on a tree top.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] People have enjoyed celebrating Christmas by decorating a Christmas tree for many years. Typically, the Christmas tree is decorated from top to bottom with ornaments of many different types. The decorating is complete when the crowning ornament, typically the most grand, is placed on top of the tree.

[0003] Securing a crowning or tree-top ornament can be difficult. The crowning ornament is often relatively large and/or heavy, and securing the ornament to the top of the tree, where the branches and trunk are the thinnest, can be challenging. Directly securing the ornament to the tree top by alligator clips, for example, is one conventional way to mount the ornament. Other conventionally-mounted ornaments simply rest on the top of the tree. Because of the size of

the ornament, however, it is not unusual to have it fall from the tree, bend the tree top or, even worse, topple the entire tree.

[0004] Accordingly, there is a need for an improved tree top mount for safely and securely attaching an ornament to a tree.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] It is a principal object of the present invention to provide a mounting device capable of securing an ornament to a tree top.

[0006] It is another object of the present invention to provide a tree-top mounting device that is adjustable in height.

[0007] These and other objects are achieved by the present invention which, in one aspect, relates to a mounting device including a housing and an elongated support slidably received within the housing.

[0008] The mounting device may additionally include a fitting head disposed at a distal end of the elongated support, a

fastener adapted to secure the housing to a tree and a lock to secure the sliding rod in the housing at a desired position.

[0009] In another aspect of the invention, the fitting head is coupled to an ornament by way of a bayonet coupling.

[0010] In yet another aspect of the invention, the fitting head comprises a disc and a cylindrical connector, and the disc and the cylindrical connector are adapted to receive an ornament.

[0011] These and other aspects, objects, and features of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description of the preferred embodiment of the present invention, read in conjunction with reference to the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a mount according to the preferred embodiment of the present invention;

[0013] Fig. 2 is a top plan view of the mount according to Fig. 1, showing a fitting head;

[0014] Fig. 3 is a side elevational view of a crowning

ornament;

[0015] Fig. 4 is a bottom plan view of the crowning ornament; and

[0016] Fig. 5 shows the mount according to Fig. 1 attached to a tree, supporting the crowning ornament.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0017] This invention is directed to a mount for securing a crowning ornament to the top of a Christmas tree. Generally speaking, the mount is extendable in length. This allows a base portion of the mount to be secured at a relatively sturdy location on the tree below the top branch. The ornament is attached to the opposite end of the mount and can be positioned, as desired, to be displayed at or above the top branch of the tree.

[0018] Fig. 1 shows a perspective view of a mount 1 for a crowning ornament according to the preferred embodiment. The extendable length of the mount 1 in this embodiment is accomplished by a telescoping structure. As illustrated, the mount includes at least a housing 2 and an elongated rod 4. The elongated rod slides within the housing to adjust the height of the mount. Although illustrated in Fig. 1 as having an elongated rod and housing, the mount may have additional elements slidable within one another, i.e., in telescoping

fashion, in order to achieve a shorter overall length when collapsed and to achieve a longer overall length when fully extended.

[0019] The mount 1 may have length sufficient to permit the proximal end 11 to contact the base on which the tree and a conventional tree stand are supported. Alternatively, if the crowing ornament does not require such support, the mount may be secured to the tree, as described below, without reaching the base.

[0020] A fastener 6, such as a hook and loop type strip, is attached to the housing 2 and secures the mount to the tree by embracing the tree trunk or other portion of the tree such as branch. Preferably two fasteners 6 are used, but fewer or more than two fasteners 6 may be provided depending on the ornament to be mounted. The hook and loop type strip is preferred, but other connectors such as, by way of nonlimiting example, twine, ties or spring-loaded alligator clips may also be used without departing from the scope of the invention.

[0021] Preferably, a lock 8 is provided on the housing 2 to secure the elongated rod 4 at the desired extended position within the housing. In this example, the lock 8 is a

thumbscrew that engages a threaded hole in the housing 2. As the thumbscrew is rotated, its stem contacts the elongated rod 4 and by friction prevents it from moving. Although a thumbscrew is shown as the lock 8, other structures may be used. For example, a friction fit among the elements of the telescoping rod, a spring-loaded protrusion and hole arrangement (as typically used with umbrellas), or a knurled ring, which when rotated cinches down the elements of the telescoping rod (as found on tripods or monopods for cameras) can be employed.

[0022] As best seen in Figs. 1 and 2, a distal end of the telescoping rod is provided with a fitting head 10 for securing the crowning ornament. In this embodiment, the fitting head 10 includes a disc 14 and cylindrical connector 16 for receiving the ornament.

[0023] As illustrated in Figs. 2 and 4, a face 20 of the connector 16 on top of the mount 1 has one or more holes or slots 18, which receive bayonets 22 located on a mounting surface 24 of the crowning ornament 26 in a bayonet-style coupling. Of course, other alternatives for securing the ornament to the connector can be provided.

[0024] The connector 16 also preferably includes indentations 28 on its face 20 each for engaging a biasing leaf 22 extending from the mounting surface 24 of the crowning ornament 26. The leaf 22 includes a protrusion 25 which interfits within the indentation 28 when the crowning ornament 26 is fully rotated with respect to the fitting head 10. This action confirms that the bayonet coupling 26 is complete and secure.

[0025] When the crowning ornament 26 and fitting head 1 are locked together, the connector 16 contacts an interior surface of an annular protrusion 30 of the crowning ornament 26. As best seen in Figs. 3 and 4, the annular protrusion 30 surrounds the recessed mounting surface 24 and can be supported on the disc 14. This arrangement is preferable since it provides additional support for the crowning ornament 24.

[0026] Fig. 5 shows the mount 1 attached to a Christmas tree and holding a crowning ornament 26. The mount 1 is attached by the fasteners 6 on the housing to the tree trunk or branches near but not necessarily at the top of the tree. The crowning ornament 26 is secured to the elongated rod 4 at an opposite end from the mount 1 and can be raised and lowered

according to preference.

[0027] While the present invention has been described with respect to what is presently considered to be the preferred embodiments, the invention is not limited to these disclosed embodiments. Rather, the present invention covers various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the appended claims. The scope of the appended claims is to be accorded the broadest interpretation so as to encompass all such modifications and equivalent structures and functions.